

Shipping and Ports Organizations Urge Support of Maritime Sector



The International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) and the International Association of Ports and Harbors (IAPH) have joined forces to call on G20 leaders to act quickly to protect global supply chains from the impact of COVID-19. In an open letter, the two organizations representing the global shipping industry and the world's ports and harbours stated that in this time of global crisis, it is more important than ever to keep supply chains open and maritime trade and transport moving. Leadership from the G20 in calling for a coordinated approach by governments, working in conjunction with the UN International Maritime Organization, WHO, and other relevant agencies is therefore of the utmost importance.

The letter highlighted that about 90% of global trade is transported by commercial shipping, which moves the world's food, energy and raw materials, as well as manufactured goods and components, "without which modern society simply cannot function." The joint letter has been sent to G20 government leaders and UN bodies ahead of their extraordinary G20 summit on Tuesday 24 June 2020.

Shipping is the Lifeblood of the World

As for Guy Platten, Secretary-General of the [ICS](#), he stressed that: "Shipping is the lifeblood of the world. Without the efficient and safe transportation of food, medical supplies, raw materials and fuel, countries could face an even more difficult situation than the one we are all facing. We need nations, led by the G20, to work together to provide coordinated rather than knee-jerk restrictions to protect us all from COVID-19."

Mr Platten also emphasized the need for pragmatic, science-based and harmonized guidance for the global maritime sector. He explained that this would ensure the safe delivery of goods.

Protecting Public Health

Patrick Verhoeven, managing director of the [International Association of Ports and Harbors](#), added: "Whilst the primary objective of protecting public health should not be jeopardized in any way, ports must remain fully operational with all their regular services in place, guaranteeing complete functionality of the supply chain."

Governments should also support shipping, ports and transport operators, Mr Verhoeven said, in order to do everything possible to allow the transport of goods in and out of ports so that food, medicine and other vital supplies continue to reach people worldwide.

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